



Early Poems 1996-2006  
Adam Fieled

Cover photo by Matt Stevenson  
Adam Fieled in South Philadelphia, 2004  
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## Credits

**Argotist Online, P.F.S. Post**— “Song for Maria”

**Big Bridge, Melancholia’s Tremulous Dreadlocks**— “Twisted Limbs”

**fieralingue**— “Pigs and Planes”

**Great Works**— “To Gil Ott,” “Façade”

**Hinge Online**— “Prince,” “Disappear,” “Technician of Tough Love,” “On Love”

**hutt, Starfish**— “Song for Genevieve”

**luzmag**— “Red Life”

**Mipoesias, Mirage**— “Wittgenstein’s Song”

**Seven Corners**— “Ode On Jazz”

**Siren’s Silence**— “Clean”

**X-Peri**— “Feel”

## Clean

I gave myself an enema the other day,  
    took some antibiotics.

Thought to myself,  
    "This is really the poet's  
place in the world—  
    not sitting in some pasture,  
not smoking in some bar,  
    not fucking someone lovely,  
not courting Gods or Jesus.

No.

The poet's place  
    is kneeling down,  
naked,  
    with something  
or other  
    stuck  
up his ass,  
    in a desperate  
attempt  
    to get  
clean."

*April 1998, North Halls, State College*

## Prince

Wesley wore silk pajamas—  
he looked very regal,  
planted before the floor TV.

I would sit next to him,  
waiting for the ugly nurses  
to feed us our pills, and take our pulses.

He told me about his car,  
his mother,  
his buddies— the catalogue

of adolescent normalcy—

and you wouldn't think  
he was schizophrenic,  
listening to him speak.

In fact, I thought  
he was a prince,

Albeit one who was,  
like most princes,

at the mercy of his servants.

*May 1998, Paul Smyers bookstore, State College*

## **Disappear**

The bleached blonde shook  
the two white bowls together,  
one atop the other,  
making a Caesar salad.

Another bleached blonde, my  
girlfriend,  
watched me watching  
this meticulous process.

Dug her engine-red  
nails into  
the sweet secrecy  
of my inner thigh,

Saying, wordlessly,  
“If you think that’s  
a good trick,  
You should see me  
disappear  
sometime.”

*May 1998, Shlow Library, State College*

**The dawn broke over our bodies**  
*for Jennifer Strawser*

The room spun a wide arc, I feigned indifference, compact blue sky tightened, you sighed, I put a silent right hand on your thigh, heavens opened, venom woke, wound itself around us, the dawn broke over our bodies—

Limitless, primitive flower, first flush of power, teenage friction, skirt-chase eyelids, lipstick spasms, ingrained anger, you panted relentless, the dawn broke over our bodies—

Drunken boated, Rimbaud ice cream, I heaved, felt myself burning, bleeding, too-close breath, breasts, I felt you perfectly as an ideal forest, the dawn broke over our bodies—

The leaves died from gyrations down, into a pained place where static passion moved, was moving, we lost it, I hated you for the coming, into the coming day, slobbering dogs, crosses making Christ himself cower, absolving saints, the dawn broke over our bodies—

Our souls' music created sex for its own amusement, passing time, my sex standing for yours, bound in the breathing of stars, cutting into life deeper, space-shuttle hurtling skyward, sports car on receptive freeway, the dawn broke over our bodies—

*September 1996, North Halls, Holmes Hall, State College*

## To Gil Ott

What  
naturally  
becomes  
a soul's  
ascension?

Children's  
gestures  
transmuted  
willfully  
into

armor  
against  
waves  
pushing  
downwards?

Excavation  
of roots  
doesn't equal  
destruction  
of such—

death,  
a going  
deeper,  
higher,  
paradox.

*2004, University of Pennsylvania, West Philadelphia*

## Façade

I'm that façade  
    etched in brick  
you brought to bear on one level

opened  
    able to close  
connecting landscape to sky

it's fine  
    it's blue  
a public secret for the greater good

dark lions  
    freeze  
near portals limned with prey

sun-backed  
    moon-streaked  
it all adds up and it's enough

*2004, Logan Square, Philadelphia*

## **Red Life**

mark rothko  
came to me in  
a dream and said,  
each color chunk is  
a way of life,  
you must choose.

i'm wearing a red  
sweater, that's my choice.  
anything not to be  
bloodless.

*2005, Logan Square, Philadelphia*

## **Wittgenstein's Song**

Merely brilliant is no match  
for being intimate. When you catch  
a wave that breaks, you can only  
half-determine its' course. Lonely  
is the determined man, whether  
it's he who decides his fate or fetters  
the world lays on him. This  
I learned from a young man's kiss.

Thus, I've learned, said nothing.  
To be silent is something  
for the wise to practice. Words  
go too far. How much have we heard  
worth holding onto? How much said  
that can placate what we dread?

*2005, Last Drop Coffeehouse, Center City Philadelphia*

**Technician of Tough Love**  
*for Alexandra Grilikhes 1932-2003*

Puzzling your way back from nothingness  
you must be; if the Void is an abyss,  
to conquer it in life is impossible.  
There is a blessing in ritual,  
but it is all from one pull.

Your private treasures I never knew;  
beyond the Indian drums (of which you had  
a collection), was there something,  
some book, some record, you prized  
above all others?

You were a technician of tough love,  
collected hearts; had a passion  
for Chinese herbs boiled down  
to the root, to retrieve essential.,  
healing strength;

ministered weary angels  
needing succor, familiar w/ your tongue,  
your breath, the beating of your heart.  
Saintly, to feed some soul's need  
for flesh, nectar, sanctuary,  
oblivion;

now it's death's mystery  
from which you can't escape—  
maybe. I profess & confess  
utter bewilderment.

Remember lunches  
at Essene, 4<sup>th</sup> Street, the crutch  
of good caffeinated coffee, conversation,  
a few hours rest; was eternity  
there, watching you, your Muse,  
waiting silently to bear Her naked flanks  
to your disciplined pleasure?  
Who would know but Her  
how you, a restless spirit, learned?

*2003, Logan Square, Philadelphia*

## A Dream

The night, as I recall it,  
was moonless. An  
ambiance of demonic  
enchantment hung  
heavy over grey  
concrete parking lot.  
It was a carnival of  
dead souls, ghost-wedding,  
vampire funeral. No  
rides, cotton candy,  
starlit skies, carousels,  
only shades of sniffing  
bloodhounds, consumptive  
spaces, conglomerations;  
strange animal glamour  
of spilled blood. Deep  
implications of hell, chills.  
I awoke: thunder crackled  
over the trunks of trees.

*Summer 1996, Arden Road, Guelph Mills*

## Ode On Jazz

Physical beauty, Formal Rigor of God—  
spiritual beauty, Economy of God—  
Natural Will, Transcendent Will,  
Facile Will in all its’ dismal “there-ness”—

Piano broken chords breaking down space  
like watching bits of paper collect,  
contained in a 12-bar blues; root  
notes you tend to lean on,  
or maybe a honking minor third,  
a harmonic multi-colored sharp...

Follow your compulsion into flurries,  
clusters of connecting phrases,  
then a pause to sanctify as the progression  
resolves after lingering on the fifth  
for the appointed time—  
pentatonics mainly w/ some suspensions,  
sheets of sound, trademark leaps,  
like watching a rainbow erupt  
out of the placid bowels of street-lakes,  
sparrows in the gutters,  
Eliot-esque alienation syncopated  
impossibly high & mighty...

Repeat the repetition now into major scale—  
Ionian gold, major-third suspensions again,  
almost midnight for tremulous trees,  
also hipsters, flights of birds, rabbis  
in the wilderness as blues ends; here’s a quicker  
quirkier jarring bit to cut  
your teeth on...

Base bottom notes natural like ferns,  
ride the ride cymbal like musical fellatio,  
roll w/ rolls & kick-drum ejaculations,  
what Hart Crane heard in bridges,  
only blues (so bridge seldom comes),  
stasis achieved nicely replicates movements,  
bowel, kidney, heart-beat, daring snare of lip-ness,  
thickness, quickness,  
get it all out for all of us into the brick-laden city,

mutter of exhausted midnight buses

as vibrato notes shiver, miniature  
solos on the toms creates energy  
of emptiness among the weird abundance,  
concluding w/ roll on the snare, now bass  
also investigates metaphysical space,  
not so much implacable as inexhaustible  
eruptions; spring of autumn,  
autumn of spring...

Seasons of balance, compromise,  
away from extremes; Middle Path exteriorized,  
oh piano on a minor seventh which bespeaks  
longing for a more ethereal world,  
elegiac as the last apple of October, eaten  
by a Halloween camp-fire, beyond blues  
of Earth into cadence, dying fall of pure moon,  
ravaged, torn from the throat of persistence,  
mute existence destroyed completely  
and on fire, a universe of fingers & mouths,  
looking down the tide of Death into eternity,  
square-shouldered & erect,  
freezing into whims of Ultimate “there-ness”,  
beyond ordinary notions of quotidian abyss  
in one long sitting pow-wow peace-pipe corn-cob  
wholesome dinner of Voidness,  
but insinuated only to drive away singularity....

Jazz is plural,  
they give you a space, show you its' contours,  
allow you to move around & drown  
if you want over hilltops of remorse, created  
by Love or dolorous longing & especially  
Central Parks of the soul & intellectual Bordello  
life cut & pasting its' bleak outline over rooftops  
& bluebirds—

*2002, Logan Square, Philadelphia*

## Song for Maria

My scarlet letter let you in  
We rallied on our separate beds  
The way to blue was flushed with ice  
Your tongue possesses everything

(lighten my,  
watch my,  
blow my)

In any case, the case is closed  
We walk the streets, a trackless train  
My verdant prayer is your own skin  
I can't believe I'm free again

Relax—

Ice yr drink—

Think—

Pursue a purpose, lost in flame  
Become the scum you dote on, crab  
The sky, the ground, the square you are  
The realm of flesh is one lone purge...

mercy        mercy        mercy  
              mercy        mercy

*Fall 1998, West Nittany Avenue, State College*

## Twisted Limbs

Apocalypse out there. Here, endless wheels, sparks; pockets of restrained & segmented light. Lovely ways you defy me. Best moments, always, you on top, when the world ends a little bit. Warmth between lovers can never be unnatural. Nor can hostage-taking, or a healthy regard for oblivion. It's all that's left in common between us & them: twisted limbs. Our mouths move like theirs: flips, bites. Our movements prefigure the same ends: consummated peace, mediated silence, "deliberate hebetude." We're w/ them as a necessary antithesis. They can't see us. They never could. It's left to us to make a balance, if we can. We'll need nothing less than luck.

*2005, Logan Square, Philadelphia*

## On Love

What tide is the realest, which pulls in a kiss?  
The rigor of reaching the thing-in-itself,  
from subject to object, chaos to bliss,  
our frail intuition of heavenly health?  
Our love is not molecules, dumbly colliding,  
nor is it knowledge, formal and static,  
nor is it accident, reasoned and plumbed—  
it's real, meta-rational, soaring and gliding,  
felt like an earthquake, bringing up panic,  
taking our parts and achieving a sum.

The greater part of love is sacrifice—  
flesh intermingled, tensing (push!) tingled,  
this is the secret I learn from your eyes.  
Giving my body, knotted, single,  
tiny eruptions that come from my tongue;  
plunging down surfaces, slicking the flesh,  
thoughtless as leopards or hurricane winds—  
watching you shudder, watching you come,  
rapt in the throes of an innocent death,  
giving my life to an inch of your skin.

Thus, we trade in secure oblivion  
for reckless reality, messy and fleeting.  
Such is the cosmos— creation, carrion,  
motions of molecules merging and meeting.  
Nothing is lost but notions of self-ness,  
hard ideations that close and clatter,  
rages of ego that strain at their walls—  
nothing is gained but a sense of the deathless,  
"there-ness" of spirit, "there-ness" of matter,  
ultimate "there-ness" that scares as it calls.

*2003, Logan Square, West Philadelphia*

## Pigs and Planes

I don't believe in poetry.  
It's a slant that wavers  
around different patches  
of sky, or mud chucked  
on slats of a sty. Or it  
could be the pig, or the  
plane, farmer or pilot,  
pork-chop industrialist, air-  
traffic controller. The one  
thing it isn't is itself.  
To say poetry is poetry  
is a rank offence, post-  
misdemeanor, sub-felony,  
the sort of sin credulous  
people pray against. Pigs  
you can believe in, & sties.  
Planes you can believe in, & skies.  
I don't believe in poetry.

*2006, Logan Square, Philadelphia*

### **Song for Genevieve**

Flip-flop her legs (so soon!) are perfect  
Sunlight burnishes her kneecaps  
She's a swan of smoothness  
A mint to be dissolved in (strong!) tea  
An oyster to be de-pearled w/ two hands

(Yawning  
gape  
of coagulated  
sunset—

Perpetual cricket  
buzz sticks  
to pure ancient  
leaves in breezes—)

She's poignant, pained, church-stained  
Gravy-lust, the merchandise of sailors (tides!)  
Orally injected (wet!) anti-depressants  
You're killing me (Hepburning my body!)  
Spread a flag over yr naked back, arch—  
over the wall— push!— over the sky;  
Stars, planets, universes yarned in a spin;  
Navigate the (gated!) grave of the Milky Way;  
Eat the chocolate donut of midnight—

*Fall 1998, West Nittany Avenue, State College*

## Feel

I.

I saw the greatest artists of my generation parched, hardened & scarred  
by a virtual machine,  
blood cleaned from shiny surfaces, purposed to cut out the soul's wisdom, the body's  
agita, the heart's  
heaviness, creators neutered & spayed by a decaying empire, wired  
for a never-ending battle  
w/ bureaucrats, corporate drones & art-world phonies, bones rattling  
in Philly February snow & ice,  
D.C.'s perpetual snooze, loose NYC streets that tighten round the Village,  
while they tried to chill-pill themselves,  
direct their energy to the task at hand, finding a plan, an escape route from playing  
cogs, greased-gears freezing all around them—  
who worked for banks & were fired for downloading porn, moved into dank South Philly  
studios, recorded, put out CDs, whored themselves to wine-stores & occult dives  
where poor mottled matrons paid ten dollars for card readings & felt themselves  
bleed at the collapse of the Tower,  
who stripped, did coke, published poems on the Net, learned massage, started as Temps,  
ended as Temps, sang dirges at West Philly art-parties for free Schlitz, dove-  
tailed joints in brick alleyways, scars glossed over w/ blush, sweaty-breasted,  
who wrote comic book epics for guitar & voice, developed mystical Jesus raps at Goth  
clubs, Christian-blissed as Trent Reznor blared through stacks of amps & love-  
boys got blow-jobs in corners,  
who were pregnant at 21, had & ignored the kid, got locked in jail for neglect, expecting  
daddy to come w/ bail, no help from a shitty city,  
who threw out poetry to work for an architect, drank w/ kids in Manayunk bars  
& got a beer-gut, "make it new" screwed into soft-fucks,  
who were forced into drag by failure, post-avant punk records dis-chorded into oblivion,  
scarcely attended bumper-boring tours from Alaska to Milan,  
who made the cover of the City Paper, lost a sugar-mommy & dealt coke, wigger pants,  
trench-coated, eyes bleary, nose runny, walking round & round liquor  
stores miming interest in Pinot Grigio,  
who got on planes to London to live in sardine tins, no sex for two years, music biz lies  
don't work even near the Hyde Park Serpentine,  
who spent afternoons at McGlinchy's cadging Manhattans, making out w/ strangers,  
blowing band dudes w/ Ron Wood haircuts, dreaming of a Khyber stage &  
the place packed,  
who lost a hustler father to heart failure, took Greyhounds to Atlantic City weekends, put  
trust-fund dollars on poker chips glistening black in the lurid light, ice rattling  
in gin tumblers, Italian pimps leaning forward for the kill in silk pants,  
who painted Apollos & Athenas in high-windowed studios in the Gilbert Building,  
getting laid on pull-out black sofas stained cadmium red,  
who went to D.C. to lobby, did puppet shows miming councilmen in Philly, gave up lit  
to look for kinks in The System & were left holding onions in the Italian  
Market,

who managed Chinese restaurants in State College, sang shirtless for bands at the White Lodge, sailed off to Oregon looking for a label,  
who followed two L.A. chicks from Bar Noir to Ocean City, snorting H off a hotel toilet  
& becoming a ghost & drifting down halls & collapsing on carpeted stairs,  
who played soccer w/ tin cans on summer afternoons in alleys off of South Street, Blow Fly singing “you’re too fat to fuck” in the background,  
who took in jail-bait to complete a ménage a trios, then watched her try to jump out the window of the Highwire Gallery, strip at parties but for a thong, get arrested for stealing from a Verizon register, all the while keeping two boyfriends in South Jersey, construction workers, blind to the bricks,  
who spent nights chasing hipster-girls in Upper Darby, paying the cab-fare from Dirty Frank’s, then left to rot on the downstairs couch surrounded by plastic Christmas candles & a mother’s footsteps down the stairs,  
who curated minor shows at the Kelly Writer’s House, dreaming of future glory, having Koons & Schnabel show up & kiss ass to the one & only,  
who shouted at drunken idiots through bull-horns on 4<sup>th</sup> Street Mardi Gras, perched in windows like Dada ready-made patrolmen,  
who took girls to the Walnut Street Bridge & laid in the grass at midnight, ‘til cops white blazing light scared their pants on in the summer mist,  
who stumbled half-awake onstage at Doc Watson’s, ploughed through a short set & sat at the bar knocking back Tequilas, eager for the next gig,  
Grape Street, Pontiac Grille, La Tazza, Balcony, hallowed stages where the eternally neglected Philly bands knocked out Fixx-mixed Corgan-riffed Patti Smith blues, watched by no one in particular, & thus by the Gods,  
who started independent newspapers & did press-runs of 10,000, garnering national acclaim & absolutely no money,  
who worked nights at the Taco House on Pine Street, smoking pot in the back room, scribbling notes for an endless first novel to be read at Molly’s Books while despair unfolded of ever knowing anything about sex,  
& who therefore threw out a U of Arts degree to strip, thinking of Colette & Courtney Love, wanting to know what this flesh thing was all about,  
who died in obscurity in Roxborough, then had volumes of poems thrown away by a jealous lover who was somehow managing the estate, & is therefore even more obscure, Alexandra, unacknowledged legislator of Philly lit, stalking health food at Essene, reading at Robin’s, always taking the bus, a car too much hassle & no time to scribble poems in the back,  
what were you working for if not eternity? Your name up in the klieg lights of greatness, may happen yet, some of us are holding a torch, will continue to, for you—  
who had pictures taken w/ Allen Ginsberg, then locked themselves in the house once the Painted Bride Quarterly was gone for good,  
who were reduced to writing fishing books when the poetry wouldn’t fly, then insisted on comparing themselves to Joyce, Proust, & Kafka,  
who hooked up w/ metal-faced teenagers in stairwells, sucking on brass where a nipple should’ve been, riding a nitrous high into a screened window,  
who met guys on the Internet & moved up to Philly from Florida, settled in studios at Juniper & Locust & were watched by perverts in the parking lot next door,  
& then joined spoken-word bands & did shows in baby-doll dresses, took up w/ a poet,

got cheated on by a poet & went back to Florida & came back again,  
who decorated an apartment w/ fourteen dead Christmas trees, licked up pine needles  
on slow nights & had whiskey-drunk one-night stands to kill time,  
who decided to move to L.A., was psyched to move to L.A., got everything packed to  
move to L.A. & then realized that there wasn't any money left,  
or moved to L.A. via Daddy's money & helped sign bands to major labels, gave up  
painting, got a new boyfriend & turned into a palm tree,  
who appointed themselves guardians of Duchamp's bikes, staged toilet races in Old City,  
installed grungy bathtubs, humongous cheese graters & doodles of teeth being  
shaved in space 1026, welded themselves to the Last Drop & the Bean, were  
followed by throngs of Dada-minded hipsters, then went into hiding,  
who bought condos off Washington Square, were ripped off by newspapers, wrestled  
w/ an incomplete second novel & an NYC agent w/ a talent for evasion,  
who wrote columns for Philly Weekly & earned the hatred of hipsters for loving Simon  
& Garfunkel, saw the world behind thick glasses, wrote songs & earned a  
modest following & was then murdered by a divorce,  
who found themselves up against an Ivy League wall, fought the Philistines w/ Keats,  
& made Penn bow down to the genius of Wordsworth,  
who sat in coffee shops talking poetics & politics, acknowledging the impotence of the  
current generation in fighting Bush & his cronies,  
& also acknowledging that this generation is a small generation & virtual & unlikely  
to change anything substantial now that the Boomers run everything, & it'll  
be this way 'til they die out, thirty more years of boredom,  
who served cocktails to Centrist poets in Boston, had miscellaneous affairs w/ Philly  
writers & others, wanted to be Bonnie & Clyde w/ out Clyde,  
who made a mint off a rock record in Japan, spent it all & started Temping, all the while  
looking to keep falling in love all the time in the Village,  
who put together multi-media shows, served hash brownies & whiskey, made a little  
money & used it to buy more hash,  
who e-mailed Noam Chomsky, decided not to be Zionist & took off a Star-of-David,  
realizing that the Holy Land is only an interior reality,  
who went to live on a kibbutz & came back disillusioned w/ everything & not having  
fought in the army went out & bought guns instead,  
who fled to San Francisco for no apparent reason after putting out a book in Philly &  
watching it sit unmolested at Book Trader,  
who was fired from Barnes & Noble for feeling up female employees, worked in a loony  
bin, wrote in the loony bin, then caved in & joined the Masters program at  
Temple,  
who roamed Villanova searching for dead souls, waiting for the words to come back as  
years slipped away into a haze of academic mediocrity,  
who stood in line w/ bags of pasta at dollar stores, picked up butts from sidewalks, took  
resin hits, chomped on bits of stale bread & shat in buckets,  
who did Action paintings on cold nights in Northern Liberties, slaved away at Office  
Cents lugging parcels around Center City, latched onto female grad students w/  
swank apartments & made slow-motion art movies of silent screams & hollering  
demons wading through the half-frozen Delaware,

who painted Kabbalistic cool-color fantasies & sent them to Tyler openings, managed restaurants & threw canvases away & walked around Germantown awaiting the arrival of the Sixth Race who will cool the Earth & set it on the Tree of Life & protect it from malignant ministers of Malkuth,

who retreated to Philly after 9/11 to find the city half-dead & the sinking stink of global warming hovering over Rittenhouse Square like a huge clove of garlic, & the vampires w/ Gucci glasses wandering & watching & warping what tenderness remained for lovers of cigars & Salman Rushdie,

who mourned for Rachel Corrie from a perch at the Good Dog, wrote secret pro-Palestinian pamphlets & hid them under socks & condoms,

who tried painting & poetry & music but found the balance in yoga, only to find the yogic mind devalued in the capitalist slip-stream of a run-down economy, & thus made plans to go to New Mexico for the summer & squat amidst clay,

who found themselves a million miles away from everything on Race Street, so retreated to Cherry St. to hit on Moore girls & manicure-giving bar-maids, & took one home & found her ready & then was too drunk to fuck,

who ploughed through five years PHD work to find a vacant job market & the few open classes not enough to pay rent, so built houses in the 'burbs & sipped Bud in rabbi's back yards hearing stories of Moses & Joshua & Aaron, & the story of Job hit a special nerve,

who got fat in Bainbridge Street lofts living off pot-dealing money, writing landscape poems remembering Virginia beaches & a shiksa's skinny little ass, how much give it had or didn't have as it bobbed up & down in the waves,

who met booty calls on the Franklin Institute steps & got naked & boned watched by Jane across the street fingering herself secretly,

who got sent to Budapest by parents to study math, having failed out of Penn & Temple & having been burned out by years of scraping three-chord riffs & hitting bars & orgies & all the time wondering why things seemed so empty,

who were exiled to academic New Hampshire, poems in hand, devising childhood vignettes of coffee Moms & smoking Dads & cold mornings out on Federal,

who kept afloat writing copy for Urban Outfitter's, getting blitzed at poetry parties & up-staging ex-boyfriends w/ yuppie-puppy hook-ups,

who worked as concierge at the Four Seasons, scored w/ a pale blonde bookstore chick only to have a bookstore Byron steal her back & write about it,

& you have to see him every day, he's always lurking in odd café corners & no one knows what he's thinking or why,

(& in fact no one knows what anybody's thinking, it's a sin & a drag & candor is in short supply in an artificial virtual era, & our "there" is nowhere),

who collapsed in lines at Starbucks, knocking over displays of gourmet tea, spent two weeks in the psych ward at Jefferson, visited by solicitous boyfriends bearing chocolate & coffee table Raphael books & playing ping pong for hours while several schizophrenics huddle together watching "Sleepless in Seattle",

who picked up photographers in coffee-shops & boned them sans condom on piles of black & white prints,

who prowled through suburbs w/ a half-lit bowl, passing dread Cheltenham where endless tears flowed through virginal misery, stopping for a deep hit by the old house drowning nostalgia in thick green smoke,

who toured the world & got famous & threw it away for a needle & couldn't sleep for the

thought that the thing could never happen again,  
who sat at Gleaners waiting for contracting jobs, played UNO & Scrabble & were masters  
of both, well-spoken beneath knitted caps & trapped as lame tigers,  
who got knocked up by Rastafarians & were left to raise babies on a waitress's salary,  
picking up tips & shit for being bitter, sister at home keeping the baby fed,  
who wrestled demons of bi-polarity tool-box in hand, looking for lost screws & sockets,  
fixing locks toilets hinges refrigerators, hoping the voices wouldn't come at an  
important moment, rattling through the ether w/ a sinister cackle, mocking the  
silliness of ever doing anything other than smoke drink & fuck,  
who were flushed out of New Orleans like a tampon back into the soot of Spruce Street,  
drinking through frigid winter Philly doldrums, mornings too raw for walking,  
too-white music in the clubs, no mint juleps on the menu, only Jager & Jack &  
Stoli & Captain Morgan's,  
who got it on w/ keyboardists for riot grrl bands in bathtubs flooding tiles splashing walls  
all for ten seconds of the ultimate chorus,  
who slept w/ a different guy every night two months then took a year off writing  
confessional verse on My-Space for 40,000 friends,  
every one of whom wanted sex, love, a chance to hold somebody tenderly & forget that  
the whole virtual charade ever happened,  
who labored through slow days in Philadelphia's dead-end streets, breezes annoyingly  
sharp where Market hits City Hall & the Broad Street line gets off,  
who took the Broad Street Line to Allegheny to look at an art gallery as possible event-  
space but found a rat-infested shit-hole w/ a few bad Basquiat imitations on  
the wall & a toilet dripped on not by Pollock & a floor that would inspire  
another Munch & a girl from the Northeast before a mirror but only too round,  
& who was forced to shut-down a co-op that no one could run any more in a fractious  
scene in a fractious city in a fractious country in a fractious era,  
a fractious world where the artist counts for shit & waits for shit to happen that can't  
happen anymore because the numbers aren't there anymore the guns are,  
the artist plays w/ guns, runs around shooting blanks at a dead world, curved into  
himself like an ingrown nail, hailed randomly by strangers to carry boulders  
up hills & teach the children, the noble artist looks for the transcendent will  
the natural will the will-to-form, the will to turn around the deadness into something else  
a place where hope lives & allows one to cope w/ what's been dead in America  
for years the spirit the spirit the feeling that things are progressing must progress  
that progress can be made & there's no reason to wait for anyone else to do it  
cause why should they it falls on the artist to create it all him or her self & that's  
what they've done & what they're doing & if a new dawn awaits or if it doesn't the  
the struggle goes on to put things down that mean something more than  
nothing which in this day & age means a hell of a lot because it's worth  
everything & you can't quantify it if you tried

## II.

What hung over Philly, NYC, D.C., what swept through the freezing streets w/ sleet &  
cold snow?

Virtual women on cell-phones clicking buttons talking Jolie Spears & Simpson, stopping  
in boutiques to try on blouses & purses & cursing maxed credit cards!

Virtual men in suits & London fog overcoats talking numbers figures & prospects betting

on Phillies Fliers Nationals Eagles living vicariously through overpaid clowns!  
Virtual tunes on the radio, three chord synth-driven sappy cliché-ridden tripe belted out  
by Whitney Britney & Mariah, plush beat-programmed god-damned garbage!  
Virtual movies w/ impossible sex scenes everything falling into place perfectly for two  
perfect bodies sans sloppiness of real caresses & how people look undressed!  
Virtual galleries showing warmed over nihilistic facile installations of piles of rubbish  
lugged in w/ out skill craft or love sitting in a dump masquerading as art!  
Virtual ads for virtual products gum that chews better Old Navy sweaters McDonald's  
hamburgers Toyotas Hondas Oldsmobiles hot wheels for prosperous suburban  
jerks jamming up expressways carbon dioxide flying into an atmosphere of  
used to be American greatness faded into days of fat complacence!  
Virtual leaders vomiting sound-bites for virtual commentators Fox News CNN spouting  
platitudinous blarney to keep the asshole half of the country happy w/ a disastrous  
administration bucking the Kyoto treaty to keep oil flowing & wiping out regimes  
for no good reason other than crude black crap to kill forests!  
Virtual TV "illustrating imbecile illusions of happiness" inducing mass spiritual slumber  
humming a nation to sleep believing everything's OK as long as Will & Grace  
stay happy inside the little idiot box on four hours a night!  
Virtual bars & conversations knocking back twenty lagers & pints of Jagermeister  
trying to forget years frittered away in pursuit of music that didn't work  
paintings that didn't sell movies that went unseen as the world swirled by  
denying they ever knew or cared what art was!  
Virtual love affairs based on fucking can't say what you're feeling but kneel before the  
altar of sex for its' own sake magazine culture!  
Virtual friends virtually loving virtually hugging virtually drugging each other on the  
Internet fretting waiting for e-mail games of who writes first!  
Virtual Jesus virtual Moses virtual Buddha virtual Jewish pleas to please return to Baruch  
Atah Adonai Elohanu Melech Chaolom,  
Blessed art thou Lord of the Universe Forever & Ever Amen now please give me Bar  
Mitzvah money to spend on Nintendo Super Mario & a hot new I-Pod ready  
for instant use on spring afternoons before Hebrew School,  
& the world is only virtually holy anymore & holiness can be bought in any store where  
money changes hands cause solvency is Heaven Thy Kingdom Come Thy Will  
Be Done our Father, Holy Ghost & Son delivered all in holy green!

### III.

suffer ye victims  
of a virtual age!  
suffer ye victims  
of Microsoft rage!  
suffer ye noble,  
wayward as Shelley,  
suffer ye hopeful,  
fire in belly!  
suffer a new, bitter, screwed, littered America!  
suffer ye who know Jesus w/ out casting

stones!  
suffer the action abandoned to dumbness,  
suffering the actions unspoken & loveless,  
suffering the action unfurling our country,  
picking up oil & oil-soaked money!

#### IV.

Allen Ginsberg! I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where we feel like two sages,

where bread is unleavened

    & no *granalloon* rages!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where the air is like nitrous,

where deadness is deadened

    & you're plagued by no virus!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where the feeling is placid,

where we're ruled by no felon

    & lay tripping on acid!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where the Buddha is grinning,

where no self-schemas leaden

    lead to feelings of sinning!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where poetry's money,

where the moon's always setting

    & the sky's always sunny!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where each spirit is sexy,

where you love who you're bedding

    & you touch them correctly!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where no fame is too famous,

where you know what you're getting

    & all power is blameless!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where each spirit can run things,

where self-governed settlements

    take place of gun-slings!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where America's perfect,

where the states have no nettles

    & the taxes are worth it!

I'm w/ you in Heaven

    where we're writing this poem,

where we're secretly betting

how far we can throw 'em!  
I'm w/ you in Heaven  
where the jokes are Eternal,  
where the Hope is unfettered  
& the dope is supernal!  
I'm w/ you in Heaven,  
where I'll stay 'til the war ends,  
where I'll lay w/ your blessing  
in the shade of a God-Head!

V.

Apocalypse! Apocalypse! It's over! It's over! We're living in twilight! Twilight the streets, twilight the houses, twilight the beats, twilight the louses! This is Rome, this is Nero, this is home, this is Zero! Apocalypse! Apocalypse! It's ending! Ending the guns, ending the money, ending the sun, ending the honey— bums, guns, sex, drugs, scum, Jesus, love, reason, all over! All ending! All covered! All bending! This is Rome, this is Egypt, this is feces! It's over! We're living in the End-Times! Over the getting, over the spending, over the feeling, over the lending! Forests, traffic, mountains, madness, plaster suburbs, drastic lovers, over! Apocalypse! Apocalypse! Twilight the schools, twilight the college, twilight the fools, twilight the knowledge! Twilight degrees, twilight alone, twilight & freeze, twilight unknown! Ending the quest, ending the artist, ending the rest, ending the parties! This is Rome, this Atlantis, this is home, this is hopeless! Dope, smoke, Starbucks, Hotmail, gropes, jokes, spirit e-mail, souls, moles, used car salesmen, fags, hags, gun-mad mailmen! Apocalypse! Apocalypse even for the faithful! Even for the Enlightened! Even for the patient! Even for the frightened! Even for the transcendent unbending resplendent defended art-mensch! Apocalypse! Run for shelter! Run for cover! Helter-skelter! Find a lover! Do something! Hold something! Screw something! Do someone! Before the end that's coming! Before the end that's drumming! Before the end of suffer! Before the end of lover! Act, suffer, feel, act, suffer, feel, & do it & do it again! Over the time when you live in a rhyme & it's okay to rest & to slowly confess! Apocalypse! Apocalypse! It's over! It's over!

*2004-2006, Logan Square, Philadelphia, Bean Coffeehouse, South Philadelphia*

